The

# Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 116 FEBRUARY, 1917. PRICE ONE PENNY. 1s. 6d. per annum post free

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## Notes of the Month.

Now that he has returned to his ministerial labours, the Rev. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick, will take up the editorial supervision of this magazine next month. We trust that both he and the Rev. Eustace Thompson have now fully recovered from the troubles which made resort to hospital necessary. We wish for the Rev. G. L. Phelps the best of health during his second period of service in France.

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One of our readers has expressed the opinion that it is high time Mr. Turner *did* come back to take charge of the Magazine again. It seems that some of the humorous touches with which his substitute has sought to enliven these pages have given offence in certain quarters. Indeed, one lady, speaking of an anecdote which recently appeared, described it as "an immoral story"!

It will be of interest to members of our body in the North of Ireland to hear that another of our ministers has undertaken Y.M.C.A. work in France. The Rev. W. A. Weatherall, of Cork, son of the Rev. W. Weatherall, of Moira, was granted three months' leave of absence by his congregation, and shortly after Christmas proceeded to France. Another item of interest in connection with the same family is the fact that Mr. A. L. Agnew, grandson of the Rev. W. Weatherall, was preparing for our ministry, but felt compelled to undertake Y.M.C.A. work in the South of England. Recently, however, he has volunteered for the Royal Air Service, and is now a member of the Reserve at the Crystal Palace, London.

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Since the New Year opened, a more hopeful spirit seems to have been abroad. The war still continues, but many people feel that the present year will see its end. So far as can be ascertained the Central Powers see no chance of ultimate victory, and the suggestion of a Peace Conference was a counsel of despair. There has been little indication hitherto of any anxiety for peace on their part when things were going well with them. Doubtless they might make a better bargain now than later—since this for them is the accepted time. Rightly, however, the Allies have willed otherwise, and in the interests of a permanent peace decreed the continuance of war. In the meantime, despite our unshaken belief in victory for the Allies, life for many people will become harder, and its burdens heavier. The cost of food is still on the upward grade, so that persons with fixed and limited

incomes must find it increasingly hard to live. On the other hand is the indisputable fact that there is a readiness to give on the part of the well-to-do which makes for the amelioration of distress and suffering. No feature of the war is more gratifying than the open-handed generosity which has made successful so many appeals on behalf of our charities. We trust and believe that this will continue until the reappearing of normal conditions shall make such work of relief no longer necessary.

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A practical beginning to the Forward Movement has been made with the holding of a United Service for Churches in Belfast and district, which took place on Wednesday evening, 17th January, in the First Church, Rosemary Street. Despite a heavy fog prevailing, there was a very fair and representative attendance. The Moderator (Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.) conducted the service, and preached a stirring sermon, based upon Revelations ii., part of 23rd verse, "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto each one of you according to your works." The preacher advocated the mobilisation of our forces for (1) the retention of our young people after the Sunday School period, (2) the awakening of the interest of the indifferent members of our Churches, (3) the spiritual awakening both to our opportunities and responsibilities which the present state of things has created.

It appears that some misapprehension exists in regard to the aims and objects of the Forward Movement. These were fully explained in the Moderator's address at the public meeting of the General Synod of the Church in June, 1916, a full report of which was published in the September issue of the "Non-Subscribing Presbyterian." To those who incline to criticise, it may well be pointed out that, whilst the Sub-Committee hope ultimately to break new ground, it is very essential that for the present efforts should be made to strengthen the foundations in regard to the Churches already established.

## AS OTHERS SEE US.

Plymouth Brethren, Particular Baptists, and several other small sects stand for the old orthodoxy, based on the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Their position is represented in some small degree in most of the Free Churches, and will always attract those who fear new ways and need the support of some external authority. The Unitarians stand for the very opposite view. They are intellectualists, pure and simple, and with them religion is a thing of the head, rather than of the heart. They have rendered very great service to the cause of the Free Churches by their zeal for education and social reform, and by their steady advocacy of freedom of theological thought. They appeal mainly to the cultured few, and as a denomination do not make very rapid progress. Their aims and methods naturally keep them apart from the Evangelical Free Churches, but as changes are taking place on both sides it is to be hoped that better relations may be established in the not very distant future. As the range of theological study widens, and the historical and experimental methods come into greater prominence, the hard dogmatic attitudes which has characterised both sides alike is found to be no longer possible. And as it comes gradually to be understood that the belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ depends not so much on philosophical interpretations of His Person and place in the Godhead, as on the Christian's personal faith and devotion to Himself, the old Unitarian controversy loses much of its point and meaning. There will always be a great gulf fixed between those to whom Jesus Christ is a mere man among men, and those to whom He has the religious value of God. Meanwhile, Christians of all types will do well to cultivate a larger charity in their relations with each other, remembering always the word of their Master: "He that is not against us is on our side."

So writes Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, in his book on "Nonconformity."

## THE NURSING SISTER.

By A. L. Aiman.

"Dear Christ, who reign'st above the flood
Of human tears and human blood,
A weary road these men have trod:
O house them in the home of God."

F. G. Scott,
Chaplain with the Canadians.

The writer of a "Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front" hides her identity very successfully from first to last in her deeply interesting book, but reveals her own character on every page.

She is evidently a woman of great experience, having served in the Boer War; possesses great energy and tact; has a saving sense of humour, and is filled with admiration for the British soldier, particularly those examples she meets with in the course of her daily duties.

"Nurse" was appointed to one of the ambulance trains running between the Flanders Front and the various base hospitals at Boulogne, Rouen, and Havre in the early days of the struggle. She thus came into intimate contact with that ragged, untrimmed edge of war one does not like to dwell upon over much. From September, 1914, till April, 1915, the train was her home and constant dwelling place. It is of her experience during this time that she chiefly writes.

She established a French class for the benefit of the train staff. "They are very keen to learn," she says, "chiefly, I think, to make a little more running with the French girls at the various stopping places." She uses "the wall of the truck for a blackboard," the lessons being sometimes punctuated with "occasional bangs from a big gun somewhere." She remarks, parenthetically, with regard to the noise a shell makes, "it is a yellowish-green sound. But you can't see it till it bursts." "Marie Thérése" (a maid-of-all-work she met in one of her later billets when attached to a field ambulance at Festubert), "simply adores the *Anglais*—they are so *gais*, such *bon courage*, they laugh always and sing—and they have *beaucoup de fiancees francaises pour passer le temps!*"

She, on her part, sets to work to learn something of the tongue of the Indian soldiers, her "poor lambs," her "poor dears," as she calls them.

"I've done a great trade in Hindustani," she writes, "picked up at a desperate rate from a Hindu officer to-day. If you write it down you can soon learn it, and I've got all the necessary medical jargon now; you read it off, and then spout it without looking at your notebook. The awkward part is when they answer something you haven't got!"

She has great sympathy for the Indians. "They hold up their wounded hands and arms like babies for you to see, and insist on having them dressed, whether they've just been done or not. They behave like gentlemen, and salaam after you've dressed them."

But there are disadvantages, for she writes: "One drawback on having the Indians is that you find them squatting in the corridor, comparing notes on what varieties they find in their clothing." "They sit and stand about naked, scratching for dear life. It is fatal for the train, because all the cushioned seats are now infected, and so are we. I love them dearly, but it is a big price to pay."

But, first and last, it is the British soldier who claims the greatest portion of her affection and regard.

Of the men generally she says "they looked what they were—British to the bone; no one could take them for any other nation a mile off. Clean, straight, thin, sunburnt, clear-eyed—all at their active-service best: no pallid rolls of fat on their cheeks like the French."

And she always found them exceedingly courteous to her. "Taking it all round," she writes, "the Regular British Army on active service is the politest and best mannered thing I have ever met, with few exceptions. Wherever you are, or go, or have to wait, they come and ask if they can do anything for you, generally with an engaging smile seize your hand-baggage,

offer you chairs, and see you through generally."

"One British Tommy said to me: 'Don't take no notice o' the dirt on me flesh, Sister; I ain't 'ad much time to wash!' quite seriously."

"We have got some H.A.C. on the train, who try to stand up when you come in, as if you were coming into their drawing-room."

"When I took the Devonshire toffee round, a little doubtful whether the H.A.C.'s would not be too grand for it, one of them started up: 'Oh, by George, not really!'"

She mentions "two Volunteer shop-boys from a London Territorial Regiment, who call me "Madam" from force of habit."

Also "an infant boy of nineteen was telling me how he killed a German of 6 feet 3 inches. 'Bill,' I says, 'there's one o' them big devils (only I called him worse than that,' he said politely to me), 'and we all three emptied our rifles into him, and he never moved again.'"

But what always calls forth her warmest meed of praise, her unbounded admiration, is the patience of the wounded and suffering soldiers, fresh from the trenches, blue with cold, vermin infested, muddied, bloody.

"The outstanding shining thing," she writes, "that hit you in the eye all through was the universal silent pluck of the men; they stuck it all without a whine or complaint, or even a comment: it was: 'Would you mind moving my leg when you get time,' and 'Thank you very much,' or 'That's, absolutely glorious,' as one boy said on having his bootlace cut, or 'That's grand,' when you struck a lucky position for a wound in the back."

As examples of this quiet spirit of endurance take the following:—"We were tackling a bad wound in the head, and when it was finished and the man was being got comfortable, he flinched and remarked, 'That leg is a beast.' We found a compound fractured femur put up with a rifle for a splint! He had blankets on, and had never mentioned that his thigh was broken. It, too, had to be packed, and all he said was, 'That leg *is* a beast,' and 'That leg is a *beast.*'

"One man in the Warwicks had twelve years' service, a wife and two children, but when 'Kitchener wanted more men' he re-joined. This week he got an explosive bullet through his arm, smashing it up to rags above the elbow. He told me he got a man 'to tie the torn muscles up,' and then started to crawl out, dragging his arm behind him. After some hours he came upon one of his own officers wounded, who said, 'Good God, sonny, you'll be bleeding to death if we don't get you out of this; catch hold of me and the Chaplain.' 'So 'e cuddled me, and I cuddled the Chaplain, and we got as far as the doctor.'

"At the Clearing H. his arm was taken off through the shoulder-joint, but I'm afraid it is too late. He is now a pallid wreck, dying of gangrene. But he would discuss the war, and when it would end, and ask when he'd be strong enough to sit up and write to that officer, and apologised for wanting drinks so often. He is one of the most top-class gallant gentlemen it's ever been my jolly good luck to meet. And there are hundreds of them!"

Subsequently we learn that the life of this "top-class gallant gentleman" was saved through the timely application of a newly discovered vaccine for creeping gangrene.

"I have a man wounded in eight places," she writes, "including a fractured elbow and a fractured skull, which has been trephined. What is left of him that hasn't stopped bullets is immensely proud of his bandages."

Or again: "an officer was brought in during the night with a compound fractured arm. He stuck a very painful dressing like a brick to-day, and said to me afterwards, 'I've got three kids at home; they'll be awfully bucked over this' He had said it was 'nothing to write home about.'"

Finally: "Last night a stiff, muddy figure, all bandages and straw, was brought in. I asked the boy how many wounds? 'Oh, only five,' he said cheerfully. 'Nice clean wounds—machine gun—all in and out again!"

She always found the men exceedingly grateful for any special attention, or any special effort put forth to cheer them.

"It is lovely taking the sweets round," writes "Nurse" (one can imagine her chuckling as she does so), "they are such an unexpected treat. The sitting-ups make many jokes, and say, 'they serve round 'arder sweet than this in the firing line—more explosive like'"

"If you see any compartment," she says in another place, "say six sitters and two top-liers showing signs of being near the end of their tether, with bad feet and long hours of the train, you have only to say cheerfully, 'How are you getting on in this dug-out?' for every man to brighten visibly, and there is a chorus of 'If our dug-outs was like this I reckon we shouldn't want no relievin'!' and a burst of merriment follows. You can try it all down the train; it never fails."

She is much impressed with the men's thoughtfulness for their fellow-wounded.

"One thing one notices about them," she writes, "is that they have an enormous tolerance for each other, and never seem to want to quarrel. They take infinite pains in the night not to wake each other in moving over the heaps of legs and arms sprawled everywhere, and will keep in cramped positions for hours rather than risk touching someone else's painful foot or hand. If you want to improve matters they say, 'I shall be all right, Sister, it might jog his foot.' They never let you miss any one out in giving things round, and always call your attention to any one they think needs it, but not to themselves."

And again: "One man with a broken leg gave me both his pillows for a worse man, and said, 'I'm not bad at all—only got me leg broke.'"

The train happened to be taking its usual load of stricken men down to the base hospital, when Christmas Day dawned upon them. "Nurse" tells us how "they came in from the trenches to-day with blue faces and chattering teeth, and it was all we could do to get them warm and fed. By this evening they were most of them revivied enough to enjoy Xmas cards: there were such a nice lot that they were able to choose them to send to Mother and My Young Lady, and the Missis and the Children, and have one for themselves."

"The Indians each had one, and salaamed, and said, 'God save you,' and 'God kill many Germans.'"

"One boy said just now, 'We 'ad a 'appy Xmas last year.'

"'Where?' I said.

"'Ome, long o' mother,' he said, beaming."

With such a personality as is revealed in her book, it is not surprising to find that "Nurse" is the receipient of many confidences, some of them being rather startling.

Take the following as an example:—"A boy in my wards, with a baby face, showed me a beautiful silver, enamelled and engraved watch he got off a 'Yewlan'; he was treasuring it in his belt 'to take home to mother.' I asked him if the Yewlan was dead. 'Oh, yes,' he said, his face lighting up with glee; 'we shot him. He was like a pepper-pot when we got to him.' Isn't it horrible? And like the boy in *Punch*, he'd never killed anybody before he went to France. I wonder what 'mother' will say to his cheerful little story."

And here we may leave her as abruptly as her diary ends. We may rest assured she is still carrying on her good work, still forming one of that great band of noble women, without whose love, sympathy, and self-denial war would become too horrible a thing for human endurance.

I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.—Attributed to T. Carlyle.

## LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

To be used with the Scheme of Instruction for Sunday Schools issued by the N.S.P.C.I. for 1917.

*February* 4. *John, the Forerunner, baptizes Jesus.* Read Mark i. 1-13. Key text, Mark i. 4.

N.B.—Call the attention of elder scholars to the fact that Mark's Gospel, which is regarded as the most historical, and John's Gospel, which is regarded as the most spiritual, have neither any reference to the virgin birth. The birth stories and the genealogies in Matthew and Luke are later additions. For the earliest Christians, Jesus was Christ, not because of his virgin birth, but because he was re-born of the spirit by baptism. (Compare John iii. 3.)

1. *John's Gospel.* John's Gospel is that of one who prepares the way. He is concerned more with past sins than future hopes. Before men could listen to Jesus they had to feel the weight of their sins and the desire for a better life. John, therefore, called upon them to repent, and laid stress on the wrath to come. He represents the accusing voice of conscience. Most of us dislike to listen to the voice of conscience, because it usually tells us how wicked we have been. But it is necessary that bad behaviour and evil thoughts should make us feel miserable, or we should never want anything better. When we have done wrong we can only undo it by feeling miserable and repentant. That is the first step. The next step is to take our sorrow to our parents or teachers, or, above all, to God, our heavenly parent, and then their love will comfort us. In this way we learn to desire goodness by detesting badness. John first—the voice of conscience; then Jesus—the spirit of mercy and love.

2. *John's humility.* As we learn elsewhere, many folk thought that John was the Messiah. But John was great enough and wise enough to know and admit that he only *prepared;* he did not know all. So he pointed them to a greater, to one who would not only make men sorry for their sins, but would love them and help them to be good. The greatest and best men are always humble. For instance, the great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, compared himself to a little child who had found just one pebble on the beach cast up by the great sea of knowledge. And Jesus himself refused to be called good, and said that God alone deserved that title, and that God alone could make men truly good. John prepared the way for Jesus; Jesus shewed the way to God.

3. *The baptism.* In another way Jesus showed his humility. He began his work by coming to John for baptism, thus showing that he too wished to repent. The consequence was that God acknowledged him as the greatest of all. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The *dove* is always regarded as the bird of hope and peace. Thus it was the dove which brought the olive branch to Noah, and so assured him of a better and brighter future. For *elder scholars* call attention to the fact that in Mark (which is believed to be the earliest Gospel) the opening of the heavens, the dove, and the voice are not stated as facts which all could see, but as a vision granted to Jesus. Matthew is more or less in agreement with Mark, but Luke states the events as though they were outwardly visible.

*February* 11. *Jesus is Tempted.* Read Matthew iv. 1-11. Key text, Matthew iv. 4.

1. *Why Jesus was tempted.* Jesus was tempted because only thus could he be an example unto us. Even though he was full of Holy Spirit, yet he had to be put to the test. Temptation is a sort of examination. Our knowledge would be of little value unless it helped us pass examinations. So we can only show our goodness by passing through temptation. Jesus had to show himself worthy of his great mission by being able to feel temptation and overcome it. Insist on the reality of the temptations. Jesus *really* felt them, and had to fight hard to overcome them. N.B.—The forty days' fasting. This seems to express the fact that he who has his body most under control is best able to face great tempta-

tions. It is a good thing to learn to do without things we like, because then we are better able to do without when the great temptations come.

2. The *first temptation.* Jesus was hungry, and, therefore, the spirit of evil entering his heart suggested he should use his great powers to make bread out of stones. But Jesus knew that his powers were for a higher purpose than merely feeding himself. "Man does not live by bread alone." So our first care should not be to snatch all the food we can, but to show ourselves helpful and loving. *For elder scholars* lay stress on the fact that the world, like a spirit of evil, tempts them to think of nothing but getting on—that is: acquiring food, property, clothes, etc. These things are all necessary; but they must never be obtained at the cost of forgetting the things of God. Honour, generosity, and truth, and such like virtues are the chief concern.

3. The *second temptation.* The evil spirit tempted Jesus to show off. This is a temptation that comes to all, especially to great and clever people. Boys and girls are always inclined to show how clever, how brave, how strong they are in order to make folk say, "Really what a wonderful boy: what a smart girl." But those who do this, especially those who are foolhardy, are tempting God. God has given us our ability to *use*, not to *abuse*, and therefore Jesus refused to abuse his great ability. He came to save others—not to show how cleverly he could save himself. *For elder scholars* note verse 6, whence arises the saying, "The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose."

4. The *third temptation.* Time after time it becomes clear that if Jesus had wished it he had the ability and power to become a great earthly king. The third temptation is a symbol of that fact. *If only* Jesus would seek evil and selfish ends he could be the king of the world. But Jesus did not come to be the king of the world. He came to lead men beyond the world to the kingdom of God. He did not want men to serve him, but wished them to follow him in the service of God. "Him only shalt thou serve." Each of us in his own way is tempted to be selfish and base in order to gain wealth, power, and place, even though the wealth be no more than an extra bun and the place be no more than a comfortable seat. In every case, however, we must remember not to serve what is evil, but to serve God.

5. "*Angels ministered unto him.*" When we fight against temptations we have more helpers than we know. God and his angels are fighting for us.

*February* 18. *Jesus proclaims the Gospel and calls the Disciples.* Read Mark i. 14-20. Key text, Mark i. 17.

1. *Jesus' Gospel.* "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is the reward for repentance. So that Jesus is quite justified in calling his message a gospel, which means "good tidings." He came to comfort and console us. Especially did he come to the sinners, above all, to those who felt themselves sinners, and therefore were ready to do good when the word of comfort and cheer was spoken to them. Everything goes to show that what Jesus meant by the kingdom of heaven was *goodness* or *love.* For instance, take the story of the man who asked his minister where heaven was. The minister took him to a small cottage, where a poor, bedridden old woman lived alone, and, pointing through the window, showed him a hard working man who gave up his one holiday in the week to come to the cottage and tidy up for the old woman and look after her. "There is heaven," said the minister. Where Love is, God is, and where God is Heaven is. *For elder scholars* take Jesus' saying that "the kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation: the kingdom of heaven is within you."

2. *Calling the disciples.* (1) Jesus chose all sorts of men to be his disciples. The first he called were humble fishermen, and, quaintly enough, he told them to come and he would make them fishers of men. No doubt had he called a weaver he would have told him to be a weaver of beautiful thoughts and deeds; or a shipbuilder to be a builder of souls able to float against the sea of temptation. (2) Note how readily

they followed him. This shows that they were repentant, and seeking someone to comfort and help them. Do not hesitate whenever Jesus says, "Follow me." We may not hear him as the disciples heard him, but every time we feel called upon to do something generous or brave that is Jesus calling, and we should immediately follow. *For elder scholars.* Jesus called his disciples to service, because only by *doing* good can we be good.

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REVIEW. It is hoped that all teachers will take advantage of the Sundays without fixed lessons, either to review what they have previously taught, or else to make up for a lesson what has somehow been missed E. H. P.

## CLERGY AND LAITY.

A correspondent to *The Times* writes:—The great massof the clergy are asking themselves why it is that they have failed so much to interest the laity in religion, and they are beginning to discover, for one reason at least, that they have been too professional. It may seem a minor fault. If a man is good and hardworking one may say it ought not to matter that he is too professional. But it matters as much in the case of the priest as of the artist. For the priest ought to have something of the artist in him. Religion has to do with realities, the greatest of all realities; and it must become unreal to the man who always talks about it in a professional jargon. For his very thought will be infected by that jargon. He will say that he has given a matter his prayerful consideration when he has done nothing of the kind. He will say that he has prayed for guidance when he has really only prayed after a formula that will permit him to do what he likes. There are a great many laymen, men rather religious than irreligious by nature, who, when the clergyman uses phrases such as these, cease at once to listen to him and look politely at the ceiling. Indeed, it is impossible to listen really to a sermon preached in professional jargon, not merely because the jargon is too familiar, but because it does actually lack meaning.

# Obituary.

## MR. JOHN JOHNSON.

On Friday, January 12th, the death took place of Mr. John Johnson, at "Grafton," Knock.

Deceased was for many years the Accountant and Secretary of the Sirocco Engineering Works; but, owing to failing health and the generosity of the firm he served so faithfully, he resigned the position a few years ago. Mr. Johnson was held in high esteem by his friends in Masonic circles, and, among those partial to the game of "bowls," for he was past President of the Belmont Club, as also he was of the Belfast Chartered Accountants' Association.

A life-long member of our Church, his first connection was established at Ballyclare, the place of his birth, and subsequently he joined York Street and Mountpottinger, which latter he served as Chairman of Committee.

The funeral took place on Sunday, January 14th, when a large number of friends came together to pay their last tribute of respect. He leaves a widow and son to mourn his death. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to them in their sorrow.

## MR. HUGH M'BRIDE, KILLINCHY.

AFTER a long and tedious illness, aggravated by complications, Mr. Hugh M'Bride died on Saturday, the 23rd December, 1916, in the 65th year of his age. In the time of his prime he was a strong and vigorous man. During the last two years or so he continually lost ground. Periodic hemorrhages on the brain caused him to be less and less sure of himself, until at last his peace and rest were entirely upset. At the last his weakness grew so great that in the end he slept peacefully away.

He was well known, not only in the neighbourhood of Killinchy, but also in the surrounding districts for many miles as a conspicuous figure at fairs and markets, or wherever gatherings of any kind took place. He was a general favourite, being of a genial

disposition and an obliging nature, with a kindly greeting for those with whom he came into contact. His neighbours valued him as a good citizen, and one who was ever ready to shoulder his share of the social obligations. Both he and Mrs. M'Bride were ever conspicuous helpers in stricken and sorrowing homes. Their ready sympathy and self-sacrificing help endeared them to a large number of friends and acquaintances. Mr. M'Bride was a staunch member of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church at Killinchy, and served on its Committee up to the time of his death. We tender to his wife and daughter our respectful sympathy in their great loss. His remains were removed for interment in the Killinchy New Meeting-house Green on Tuesday, 26th Dec., 1916, when a very numerous company gathered to pay the last respects to his memory.

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## MRS. M'MASTER, KILLINCHY.

We regret to record the demise of Martha, relict of the late Hugh M'Master Carragullin Hill, Killinchy, which took place on Thursday, 21st December, 1916. Mrs. M'Master had reached the ripe age of eighty years. She maintained an active mind and spirit to the last; and, until the last few years, her physical health was all that could reasonably be desired. Latterly, however, neuralgic pains in the head and face made sad work with her and reduced a constitution, naturally robust, to extreme emaciation and weakness. Her mind and spirit, nevertheless, triumphed over her physical condition to the end, when she sank quietly and peacefully away. The manner of her passing recalls the words of the psalmist, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep."

In conjunction with her late husband, Mrs. M'Master maintained a close connection with the Non-Subscribing Church, Killinchy. This is not surprising, when we remember that her husband was a leader in the Church for many years, taking a prominent part in its activities, and filling the position of Secretary with great satisfaction to the members. By education and attainments he was well qualified to do work of this character. The manner in which he kept the minutes of the Church speaks eloquently of the efficient manner in which the affairs of the Church were then conducted.

Twenty-five years ago Mrs. M'Master lost her husband. She was left a widow with a large family, and, no doubt, had a severe time; but, with indomitable courage, honest work, and hard striving, she and her children pulled so well together as to make farming a successful venture. Mrs. M'Master maintained her husband's connection with the Church all her days, and supported it generously according to her ability. The ministers of the new Meeting always found in her a staunch friend. She ever gave them a kindly and genial welcome to her home, and maintained intimate relationships with them. She leaves behind her to mourn her loss four sons and four daughters, all of them, except the eldest son, living at home. Her remains were removed for interment in the New Meeting-house Green, Killinchy, followed by a large concourse of friends and neighbours. The Rev. D. J. Williams officiated in the house and at the graveside.

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## MR. JAMES M'WILLIAMS.

The death of Mr. James M'Williams, which took place on January 5th, at his residence, 4 Castlereagh Place, Belfast, has removed to the higher life one who for many years rendered invaluable service in the Sunday School of the First Presbyterian Church of Belfast. To this work, only interrupted of late by his declining health, he devoted an indefatigable spirit, with a genial and sympathetic temperament which endeared him to all those with and for whom he engaged in this labour of love. Not only in the First Congregation and its Sunday School, where he had laboured so self-sacrificingly for very many years, but also in other congregations, his character was most deservedly honoured. Ever thinking more of his work than of himself, he

lived a simple life of strict integrity, never complaining, though much afflicted in both his domestic and business relations, and concealing, rather than veltilating, his misfortunes. One indication of the widespread respect he had won for himself and for his work is seen in the fact that when he retired from his position as Superintendent of the First Church Sunday School two years ago, many friends both outside our community, as well as within, made it possible to present him with a purse of gold and a substantial cheque. No recognition of his devoted labours could have been more timely, for shortly afterwards he was compelled by a seizure to give up all active work. Despite failing strength, he maintained a contented, genial spirit, and whenever possible he made his way, as for so many years he had been wont to do, to his place of worship in Rosemary Street. Cardaic failure, following upon acute pneumonia, brought his earthly life to a close. He was interred on Monday, 8th January, in the family burying place at Moneyrea, amid many manifestation of regret and respect. The service in the house and at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington.

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## MRS. DAVID ORR, KILLINCHY.

One after another the older members of the Church here are falling by the way. We have now to record the demise of Mrs. Catherine Orr, Craigarusky, which took place on Tuesday evening, January 16th, so suddenly that all was over within the space of fifteen minutes from the time she was taken ill. Mrs. Orr had been suffering from heart affection for some time past, but she had rallied after each attack, and latterly she had been fairly well. The last seizure, though apparently not so severe, proved fatal in the short time mentioned.

A staunch member of the Non-Subscribing Church, to which her husband and her own family belonged, she brought up her numerous family to be closely connected with the Church and its institutions. Her influence in this respect was all that could be desired. Few, if any, functions have taken place within the last ten or fifteen years without her sons and daughter taking a prominent part. Her son, David, has been a faithful and efficient teacher in the Sunday School for many years. She leaves behind a husband, six sons, and a daughter to mourn her loss. Two of her sons, Henry and Willie, are serving their King and Country—the one somewhere in France with the Canadians, the other with the Royal Engineers in Mesopotamia. She will be greatly missed by them all, but especially by her husband, who is advanced in years and in failing health.

Her remains were removed for interment in the New Meeting House Green on Thursday, 18th instant, the Rev. D. J. Williams officiating. A large number of friends and neighbours gathered to pay their last tribute of respect.

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## MISS WARD.

There passed away on Thursday, January 4th, a devoted member of Mountpottinger Church, Miss Isabella Ward, aged 72 years.

Originally connected with the Second Congregation, then meeting in Rosemary Street, Miss Ward joined the cause at Mountpottinger in its earliest days, when services and Sunday School were held in Rithcie's Felt Works; and her loyalty to the Church of her adoption never faltered. She taught in the Sunday School for very many years, and her charming personality proved a tower of strength and abiding good. Unassuming in all her ways, and blessed with a heart as generous as her spirit was large, she endeared herself to a wide circle of friends. She suffered long, but always bore with high courage the ills of the body. To her niece, who nursed her so faithfully, we extend our deepest sympathy.

The funeral took place on Saturday, January 6th, when the remains were laid to rest in the City Cemetery.

## QUESTIONS CONCERNING BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

### IX. Gods and Religions.

Q. 71.—If it be true that there is but one Spiritual Ruler of the Universe, how is it that many peoples or tribes believe in more than one?

A. 71.—In nearly, if not in quite, all cases the original belief was not in a single divine power, but in many or several such powers. This was because the fact of motion, wherever it was observed, even in things inanimate, as in fire and wind, and in rivers and in the sun and moon, was not distinguished from manifestation of the presence of life similar to that of man himself. Such things were accordingly believed to be either the bodies of spirits, or at least actuated, or in some sense presided over, by divinities. Even bodies without locomotion might be supposed to possess their respective spirits, so that a rock or a tree might come to be regarded as a divinity. Sometimes a human being who acquired much influence in his lifetime was believed to retain his influence after death, and was consequently felt to be a god. In such cases, in after times, it would be related, not how one of the sons of men became a divinity, but how a divinity became manifest in human guise or became incarnate in a human form, even the admittedly ordinary processes of birth and infant growth being found no stumbling block. Some peoples have believed so strongly in the continuity of the human spirit after death that they have identified the spiritual influence of which they are spiritually sensible to that which they have attributed to their ancestors, whom they have accordingly worshipped as a corporation of divinities. Sometimes one people would add to deities long known, fresh deities of other peoples they became acquainted with.

Q. 72.—How did it happen that polytheism gave place sometimes to monotheism?

A. 72.—First, it might come about that Gods, previously known separately by different names by different tribes of the same nation or in different provinces within the borders of one land would come to be identified and so reduced in number; then some of these again, for close relationship in the activities ascribed to each, might be deemed to be but different manifestations or different aspects of the same divinity. Again, the devotion paid for the time being to but one divinity might be so absorbing as to present the sensation of service to one almighty, therefore to one sole divinity. Also, sometimes it would come about that one particular god would be felt to concern himself in the conduct of one people whom he chose to make peculiar to himself; so that at first it would seem due from them to him, for favour he would concentrate on them, to confine their services to him alone, and to discipline themselves in his sole worship through dread of jealousy they naturally assumed in him, from whence would tend to grow the grand conception that he whom they had worshipped was the one sole Deity or Holy Spirit. Or, once more, one god, for powers or province popularly ascribed to him, might win through time a greater esteem than all the rest, from whence would arise the idea that he was chief or ruler, and virtually the one true God with ministering spirits. Moreover, in proportion as any one perceived, in spite of popular polytheism in the midst of which he moved, that the spiritual power, not themselves, was making for a righteousness in men, and drawing from men's minds the thoughts of an ideal of human character, the idea of oneness of the power, its singleness of design and method, its unity of godhead, would be sure to grow.

Q. 73.—Which are the most important religions of the world?

A. 73.—The most important existing religions of the world are—*Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Christianity.* Of ancient religions that have become extinct, the most important have been those of *Babylon, Egypt, Israel, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, Persia* the last still surviving in a very modified

form as the religion of the Parsees, descendants of the Persians who fled to India from Mohammedan persecution. The ancient religion of Israel may be said to survive in a modified form as the religion of the modern Jews.

Q. 74.—What is the geographical domain of the four great world religions?

A. 74.—*Buddhism* is the religion of the Chinese Empire and of Japan, also of Burma and Siam, having now but few adherents in India, where it had its origin.

*Brahmanism* is the religion of three-fourths of the inhabitants of India.

*Mohammedanism* is the religion of Turkey, Arabia, and North Africa, of Turkestan, Persia, and Malaysia, and other Asiatic lands, and of fifty millions in India.

*Christianity* is the religion of Europeans both in Europe and in America, and in whatsoever parts of the world they have settled in, also of the American Negroes and of small isolated groups of numerous nationalities or tribes brought under the influence of European and American religious missions.

The Buddhist religion is professed by a somewhat larger number than the Christian religion, but the adherents of each may be said to be equal approximately to one-third of the total population of the world, which is about 1,500 millions. The Brahman religion is professed by about two hundred millions, and the Mohammedan by some thirty millions less.

The number of the Jews dispersed throughout the world is not accurately known, but it has been estimated at between eleven and twelve millions.

Q. 75.—What great teachers of religion have appeared in the world besides Jesus Christ?

A. 75.—Besides Jesus Christ, the most distinguished religious teachers have been Zoroaster of Persia, Gotama (called Buddha, or "the enlightened one") of India, Confucius (that is "Kong the Philosopher") of China, and Mohammed of Arabia; the first three came into the world long before Jesus, the fourth long after, being born in 571 A.D.

Like Jesus, none of these teachers was the founder of a completely new theology; but, again like Jesus, each was in the first place the founder or stimulator of a type of religious morality in connection with the religion of his native land, which gave that religion a new vitality and altered form. Again, like the religion of Jesus, the religion of each of them has through time received accretions and undergone considerable modifications in a variety of ways at the hands of followers.

The salient feature in the religion of Zoroaster was dualism, or the doctrine of a conflict between a spiritual power of evil and a spiritual power of good, and of the duty of every man to show his active loyalty on the side opposed to evil. The salient feature of Buddhism was the doctrine of the presence of evil in the very nature of existence and the means of escape into a state of peace in holiness of being and righteousness of conduct. Confucius laid especial stress upon the need for right relationships between man and man. As Jesus had revealed God as before all things the Universal Father, and urged the need of love or filial piety and gladness to do his pleasure, Mohammed revealed him as the Universal Potentate, and urged the need for fear or dread submission to his autocratic will.

Q. 76.—Are we to hold that, whilst there is one true theology and one good religion, all the rest are false or worthless?

A. 76.—No. We should consider rather that all sincere theologies are at worst imperfect expressions of imperfect thoughts concerning that Spiritual Power which our human spirits feel, and all sincere religions good in their degree.

Much good awaits us in this world to do,
And while we can, let's do it, I and you.
On life's long path there must be thorns, indeed:
Let's scatter roses for the feet that bleed.

BIRTHS.

GILMORE—On December 22nd, 1916, at Ballyhalbert, to William and Lucy Gilmore, a son; baptised James M'Master, January 7th, 1917. (Ballyhemlin).

MILLAR—On November 9th, 1916, at Ballyhalbert, to Robert and Margaret Jane Millar, a son; baptised Henry, December 10th, 1916. (Ballyhemlin).

M'CULLOUGH—On December 8th, 1916, at Portavogie, to William James and Annie M'Cullough, a daughter; baptised Agnes Isabella, January 4th, 1917. (Ballyhemlin)

O'NEIL—On December 24th, 1916, at Ballyhalbert, to John and Bella Jane O'Neil, a son; baptised John, December 31st, 1916. (Ballyhemlin.)

O'NEIL—On January 4th, 1917, at Ballyhalbert, to William and Ellen O'Neil, a son; baptised Arthur, January 11th, 1917. (Ballyhemlin.)

PHELPS—January, 13th, 1917, at Beechcroft, Holywood, to Rev. G. L. and Mrs. Phelps, a daughter.

MARRIAGE.

ANDREWS—JACKSON—At Ballyhemlin, on December 27th, 1916, David Andrews, of Killyleagh, to Mary Jane Jackson, of Glastry.

DEATH.

BEGGS—On December 24th, 1916, at Ballyhalbert, Co. Down, Ellen, widow of the late William Beggs, aged 73. Interred in the Burying Ground, Ballyhalbert on Tuesday, December 26th, 1916.

## Reports.

**Ballyclare.**—On Thursday night, the 18th January, we held our Annual Party, Children's Prize Distribution, and Business Meeting. The minister, who has been training for the last two months in the O.T.C., attached to Queen's University, Belfast, referred in his opening address to the apparently strange sight of a minister of the Gospel of Peace in the uniform he was then wearing, but said it ceased to be strange when one considered the moral issues in the present terrible conflict. There was an excellent programme of music, song, and recitations, which was well carried out and thoroughly enjoyed.

* *

**Comber.**—The annual tea and entertainment for the Sunday School scholars took place on Tuesday evening, 9th January. Some sixty-five scholars sat down at the tables. After tea, an excellent programme was enjoyed by a large and representative audience, which filled the hall. Fifteen attendance prizes and ten class prizes were distributed to the successful scholars. Our best thanks are due to the kind friends who assisted in the carrying out of the programme, to the tea-makers, and to the Sunday School teachers.

* *

**Holywood.**—A meeting of the Holywood Total Abstinence Society was held on Tuesday, Jan. 9th. Vigorous addresses were delivered by Rev. D. B. Maconachie and Rev. G. L. Phelps dealing especially with the patriotic demand for prohibition or restriction of the drink traffic. During the evening songs were rendered by Mrs. S. M'Crum and Mr. James M'Kisack, and recitations by Miss Florrie Clugstone. Miss Munster was accompanist.

The Annual Sunday School Soiree was held on Thursday, January 11th, when over 70 children sat down to tea. Afterwards a number of games were much enjoyed, a short sketch very well performed by some of the elder girls, and a couple of part songs sung by the younger boys and girls. A most enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the distribution of gifts from the Christmas Tree. Our best thanks are due to those kind friends who contributed toys, etc., and to the tea-makers and all who assisted in other ways.

* *

**Killinchy.**—The annual Sunday School entertainment was held on New Year's Day, at 7-30 p.m., when an audience which filled the Lecture Hall had gathered together to enjoy the programme provided, for the most part, by the young people and children of the Sunday School. We are indebted to Miss Annie Stewart, of Comber, for giving us several songs during the evening. She is an old friend, and was, as usual, warmly received. Songs were also given by Miss M'Ilwrath, which were much appreciated. Mr. D. Orr and Miss Sarah Morrow recited, and the pleasure they gave was shown by the attention they received. One of the main features of the entertainment was a Children's Play, entitled: "Princess

May," which was performed as nearly as possible in character by the Sunday School children. Great enconiums were passed on the work. Their enunciation was clear and distinct, and their memories all that could be desired. This somewhat long play gave much satisfaction, and reflected great credit on teachers and taught. A lively sketch by the young people, called "Spring Cleaning," was well received and much applauded. The acting of the performers was distinctly good throughout. Lastly, a sketch, "England Wants Them," by three young ladies, was done with much feeling and patriotic sentiments were expressed, which were obviously to the taste of the audience. The singing of the National Anthem brought a successful entertainment to a close. * *

**Larne.**—On the evening of December 18th a very pleasant Sunday School Soiree was held in our Schoolroom here. After hymn and prayer, Miss Beth M'Ninch presiding at the piano, tea, with more than usually toothsome accompaniments, was served to all present, after which a short address was delivered by the minister, who then constituted the meeting a Band of Hope. He thus revived a very interesting and useful institution of former years, which had been in abeyance for a considerable time. Sixty young persons of both sexes signed the following pledge, which is to be observed until the age of twenty-one years:—"I promise, by Divine assistance, to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as beverages and from tobacco in every form, and that I will not gamble or use profane words." Cards, artistically illuminated and containing the pledge, were then prepared and handed to the young folk by the Sunday School Superintendent, Mr. Frank Wright, assisted by Mr. T. Pullin, amid much enthusiasm and hilarity. Miss Moore, of Larne Infant School, an experienced Band of Hope worker, was present, and, assisted the lady Sunday School teachers, Miss M'Kee, Miss Bryans, Miss Beth M'Ninch, with a few lads as stewards, and Miss Annie Campbell, in entertaining the scholars and others. It is considered that in reviving the Band of Hope something really useful has been done worthy to be regarded as an element in the "forward movement."

* *

Moneyrea.—The Annual Xmas Party in connection with our Sunday School was held on Xmas night. There was a crowded schoolroom. After tea, the children, parents and friends were provided with a very interesting programme of dialogues choruses, recitations, and action songs by the children. At the close of the entertainment prizes were distributed to the scholars by Mr. A. K. Stewart. The receipts at the door were far in excess of previous years. * *

**Raloo.**—On Saturday evening, Dec. 30th, 1916, a very interesting ceremony took place at the Manse, when a presentation to Mrs. Elizabeth Tate, organist, was made from the congregation of a handsome illuminated address, headed by a water-colour painting of the church and a costly gold wristlet watch, the former being the artistic and freely contributed work of Mr. James Steel, of Belfast The presentation was gracefully made by Mr. John R. Gray, Hon. Treasurer, to Mrs. Tate, who feelingly replied, referring to her life-long connection with the Church, and hoped the good feelings which had existed in all the past years between the members of the congregation and herself would continue. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Steel by Rev. J. M'Cleery, seconded by Mr. Samuel B. Stuart, and supported by Miss Craig, for his contribution to the success of the evening. Mr. Steel's reply was helpful and inspiring. Mr. Charles Knox's selections on the violin were much appreciated, as were Miss Craig's recitations. A large company of people was present, including the Session, Committee and members of the congregation, who were entertained to supper. Miss Jane Craig, on behalf of the Congregation, accorded a hearty vote of thanks to Rev. J. and Mrs. M'Cleery for their hospitality, which was passed by acclamation, and brought a most successful evening to a close.

**Unity Guild.**—A successful Whist Drive, followed by a dance, took place on 5th January. A very enjoyable evening was spent, and the party did not break up till after one o'clock in the morning. It is hoped that as a result a large contribution will be given to the Hospital for Limbless Soldiers. To this end subscriptions were received from Lady Patterson, Dr. Greenfield and Mrs. M'Cammon, all of Holywood.

On January 10th a Devotional Service, conducted by Rev. J. G. Davies, of Banbridge, was held in the First Church, Belfast. It is a pity that the attendance was not larger, as the sermon, which was both eloquent and appropriate, was too good to be missed.

* *

A friend is a person before whom I may be sincere.—EMERSON.


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